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December 8, 2015

MEDIA CONTACTS

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**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman John Katko (R-NY)
Transportation Security Subcommittee
House Homeland Security Committee**

Examining TSA's Global Efforts to Protect the Homeland from Aviation Threats and Enhance Security at Last Point of Departure Airports

Remarks as Prepared

The recent Metrojet crash over the Sinai Peninsula is tragically reminiscent of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing, which took down Pan Am Flight 103, killing all aboard, including 35 Syracuse University students traveling home for the holidays. Now, according to media reports, our allies in the U.K. believe that the Metrojet flight was brought down by the very same type of device used in the Lockerbie bombing. It is deeply disturbing to me that innocent people from my district in Syracuse, as well as all of traveling public, may still be threatened today by the same type of bomb used over 27 years ago. Even though this most recent attack was not targeted at American citizens or an American aircraft, we cannot and should not hesitate to learn from this tragedy and identify ways in which we can mitigate such threats from becoming successful again in the future. The international aviation system represents our modern, globalized world. However, with interconnected transportation systems comes interconnected risk. Much like the Lockerbie bombing affected my community in Syracuse, the Metrojet tragedy affects our security, as well.

We cannot afford to ignore potential security lessons from this incident. Today, the Subcommittee on Transportation Security is holding this hearing to better understand the size and scope of TSA's global programs aimed at securing international aviation, as well as recent efforts to enhance security at overseas airports with direct flights to the United States. The recent tragic bombing of the Metrojet flight, which killed all 224 people on board, reminds us once again the attractive target aviation is for terror groups. Additionally, if this attack was carried out by ISIS, as has been claimed, it represents a shift in the threat landscape against aviation and a newfound capability for ISIS in carrying out attacks. Because of this, TSA's overseas mission is now more important than ever, and it is critical that this Subcommittee understands the extent of TSA's global reach, as well as how the U.S. government is working with its foreign partners and aviation stakeholders to enhance security at overseas airports. Moreover, efforts by other entities, such as the International Civil Aviation Organization, which plays a vital role in setting aviation security standards worldwide, are an essential component in proliferating security best practices and building capacity at high risk airports around the world.

Since the Lockerbie terror attacks, we have seen a number of attempted attacks against U.S. aviation targets. These plots, such as 9/11, the Christmas Day bomber, the printer cartridge bombs, and the

shoe bomber, have each caused massive reevaluations in the way passengers are screened and security is maintained. I am happy to see that TSA has taken steps to increase security at overseas airports in recent weeks, and I hope these efforts will be successful. However, there remain gaps in security which need to be addressed.

Specifically, this Subcommittee has worked intensely throughout the 114th Congress to shed light on the serious lapses in security vetting among aviation workers with access to secure and sensitive areas of airports. Additionally, I remain very concerned at the overall state of airport access controls. We cannot solely focus on shuffling passengers through security screening, while ignoring open back doors at airports. This Subcommittee understands these vulnerabilities, which is why we have passed a number of bills, including two of my own, to close gaps in aviation worker vetting and enhance the security of airport access controls across the United States. These bills, together with our other oversight efforts, are bringing critical attention to a very important issue.

These recent terrorist attacks in Egypt, Paris, Mali and Lebanon reminded all of us in Congress of the important responsibility we have to the American people to ensure that their government is working to keep them safe from a wide array of determined and focused adversaries, who are hell-bent on threatening our lives and way of life by terrorizing our cities and skies. It is with this sober understanding that we meet today to discuss efforts to secure overseas airports and international aviation.

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